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ABSTRACT

If the teaching profession is to attract the most promising teacher candidates and retain those who are exemplary in practice, it is imperative that teachers' personal needs be attended to throughout their professional careers. In order to adequately address these needs, those designing preservice and inservice professional development must consider two important concepts associated with training: the developmental stages of adulthood and the stages of teachers' careers. Understanding the fascinating and complex intersection of these twin concepts may help those accountable for structuring educational policy and practice to implement programs that promote personal growth and fulfillment for teachers. This paper provides an overview of the literature summarizing adult development and the implications for learning at different stages of the adult life cycle. It then looks at patterns of teacher careers that describe the stages of their professional growth. Finally, it discusses how these two concepts interrelate and the implications for teacher training and educational policy. (Author)

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The Role of Higher Education in Fostering the Personal Development of Teachers

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Abstract

If the teaching profession is to attract the most promising teacher candidates and retain those who are exemplary in practice, it is imperative that teachers' personal needs be attended to throughout their professional careers. In order to adequately address these needs, those designing preservice and inservice professional development must consider two important concepts associated with training: the developmental stages of adulthood and the stages of teachers' careers. Understanding the fascinating and complex intersection of these twin concepts may help those accountable for structuring educational policy and practice to implement programs that promote personal growth and fulfillment for teachers. This paper provides an overview of the literature summarizing adult development and the implications for learning at different stages of the adult life cycle. It then looks at patterns of teacher careers that describe the stages of their professional growth. Finally, it discusses how these two concepts interrelate and the implications for teacher training and educational policy.

Introduction

Virtually every national and state report issued over the past few years analyzing the teaching profession has focused on both the quality and quantity of teachers in the profession (ATE, 1986; California Commission, 1985; Carnegie Forum, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986). Some of these reports have forecast critical teacher shortages unless the professional is made more attractive. The litany of recommendations that follow these dire predictions usually focuses on the central role that institutions of higher education must play in both preparing teachers for their first job and renewing teachers who have taught for several years.

If the teaching profession is to attract the most promising teacher candidates and retain those who are exemplary in practice, it is imperative that teachers' personal needs be attended to throughout their professional careers. In order to adequately address these needs, those designing preservice and inservice professional development must consider two important concepts associated with training: (1) the developmental stages of adults, those predictable and unpredictable passages that characterize adult growth and influence adult learning; and (2) the stages of teachers' careers, those steps that characterize the growth of the teacher from neoyphte to professional maturity. Understanding the fascinating and complex intersection of these twin concepts may help those accountable for structuring educational policy and practice to implement programs that promote personal growth and fulfillment for teachers.

This paper will first provide an overview of the literature summarizing adult development and the implications for learning at different stages of the adult life cycle. It will then look at patterns of teacher careers that describe the stages of their professional growth. Finally, it will discuss how these two concepts interrelate and the implications for teacher training and educational policy.

Adult Development

The topic of adult development has always enjoyed a widespread appeal in both the sociological and psychological literature as well as the popular press. While there is often confusion about terminology and application, the concept is most often used to connote that portion of one's lifespan development or the life cycles that take place during the adult years of life. It describes a series of stages characterized by changing patterns of social and psychological developmental tasks, concerns, activities, values and needs (Erikson, 1959; Gould, 1952; Krupp, 1981: Levinson, 1978; Oja, 1980; Sheehy, 1976).

Researchers in the area of adult development have conceptualized the cycles and stages that individuals pass through in dramatically different ways. Their models differ in the number and length of the stages and the corresponding developmental tasks that define them. This is partly due to the fact that they have emphasized different aspects of development -- psychological, familial, and interpersonal, to name a few.

Erik Erikson's conceptualization (1959), for example, includes eight developmental stages through which individuals progress from birth to death. Three of these stages span the adult years and describe the

internal conflicts common to adult life. Erikson defines the primary developmental tasks during this period of life as intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair.

Sheehy (1976) can be credited with popularizing the concept of adult development and sensitizing large numbers of people to the developmental crises or passages through which all individuals traverse. Her work was also important because, for the first time, it gave equal attention to women's unique experiences. Most of the previous research conducted on the topic gave only scant attention to the womens' developmental passages. Sheehy drew heavily on the comprehensive adult developmental theory of Daniel Levinson. Levinson (1978) visualized six adult stages that correspond roughly to six different age periods between 18 and 56. His conceptualization was designed to identify the relatively universal, genotypic, age-linked periods of adult development within which variations occur.

Another noteworthy perspective of adult development that has gained widespread support is offered by Krupp (1981). Krupp's theory of adult development characterizes adulthood as one of continual change. She described a series of seven overlapping stages, emphasizing that each may be stable or transitional. In a stable period, individuals make key decisions; in a transitional period they question, reassess, and evaluate alternative courses of action. Krupp believes these stable and transitional phases alternate during an individuals adulthood.

Table 1 provides a synthesis of the literature on the stages of adult development and the corresponding major tasks of each stage.

Table 1
A Synthesis of Adult Developmental Stages and Corresponding Tasks

Stage	Age	Tasks
Leaving Home	18 - 22	Break psychological ties with family Establish independence, adjust to life on own Select a career, initial entry into occupation Form tentative identity, create dreams Select a mentor Date, handle peer relationships Manage stress accompanying change Impatient, energetic, and productive
Becoming Adult	23 - 28	Settle in work, begin career ladder Select a mate, make marital commitments Consume wisely Solve problems on own Become involved in community Achieve autonomy
Catch-Thirty	29 - 34	Formation of adult life style and definition of self Search for personal values Reappraise relationships Become a parent, deal with young children in the home Put down roots, achieve "permanent home" Major finanacial commitments Development of long-range goals and ambitions Shift from idealism to pragmatism
Midlife Reexamination	35 - 43	Period of self-reflection and potential for turmoil Search for meaning, reassess life goals, priorities Concern for personal freedom Attend to aging parents, deal with loss of parents Acknowledge limited life span Acknowledge diminished physical skills, sexual drive Potential for marital disharmony
Restabili-zation	44 - 55	Reestablish stability in living patterns Adjust to realities of work Adjust to children leaving Redefine marriage commitment Become more deeply involved in social life Participate actively in community concerns Handle increased demands of aging or dying parents Concern over loss of spouse and personal health Selection as mentor by another person Handle budget to support child's college needs
Preparation for Retirement	56 - 64	Adjust to health problems Deepen personal relationships Prepare for retirement, disengage from activities Expand avocational interest, finance leisure pursuits Deal with loss of spouse Focus on integrity
Retirement	65 +	Disengage from paid work Reassess finances Manage leisure time Adjust to more constant marriage companion Adjust to single state Concern with personal health, be reconciled to death

While many of the models of adult development have strong intuitive appeal, they have also been criticized for lacking empirical validity (Burack, 1983). For example, how an individual moves from one stage to the next is seldom clearly defined. The assumption is often made that individuals must achieve competence at the ascribed developmental tasks for each stage in order to advance to a subsequent stage. However, many individuals while advancing in chronological age may not have resolved the problems and tasks associated with preceeding stages.

Moreover, few models have been refined to reflect the changes in adult adjustment brought on economic and social milieu of our technological age. For example, dual careers and the reentry of women in large numbers in the work force have altered the type and sequence of psychological and sociological developmental tasks that women now face.

In addition, not all individuals experience the developmental tasks associated with each stage, and those that do, experience these passages in varying degrees of intensity. In one study of 146 female educators, for example, fully one-third of the women did not experience any kind of midlife or mid-career crisis; and those that did, reported markedly different patterns in their expriences (Crow, 1985).

Despite of the methodological flaws in many of the empirical studies conducted on the subject, Schnacke, Martray, and Adams (1982) believe the literature on adult development can be immensely helpful in providing a theoretical framework for describing adult transitions. They state that the factors surrounding changes from adolescence to death are likely to multi-dimensional and not every person will experience the transitions in exactly the same manner or at the same age. Nevertheless, because human existence occurs in a shared context of time, culture, and history, there

are commonalities of experience. These commonalities may be useful in understanding the specific kinds of stressors that particular occupational subgroups (e.g. teachers) experience. This information has been found to be quite helpful in personal and professional counseling.

Understanding the stages of adult development also reinforces the basic tenets of adult learning as it is differentiated from that of the child or adolescent. Knowles' theory of adult learning (1978), for example, provides a framework for those structuring new learning experiences for adults. He emphasizes that in order to have the most optimum benefit, the learning experiences of adults must be structured differently than those for children or adolescents. Experiential learning, he stresses, must be a key ingredient to those experiences. Adults enjoy initiating and carrying out their own learning experiences. In other words, adults want to focus on problems as opposed to subjects in isolation. Moreover, adults' readiness to learn must grow out a need to know. Unlike children or adolescents, adults will readily learn from their mistakes if they are handled in a nonthreatening and nonpunitive way. Finally, adults need opportunities to try out their learning, to make connections, and get immediate feedback on their new skills and knowledge.

Teacher Career Stages

The burgeoning interest in how the teaching profession can structure incentives to promote teacher retention and job satisfaction has brought with it a growing body of literature dealing with teacher career stages. The process of becoming a teacher and continuing to stay one is a complex matter that defies simplistic models. Lortie (1975) states that teaching is essentially an unstaged occupation. This is accurate in the sense

that the profession, for the most part, lacks a define career ladder whereby the teacher through promotions and advancements gains higher status and recognition. Most educational theorists agree that stages do exist in teaching, however, at least from a developmental perspective. And these career stages can be loosely categorized according to several defined periods that move the teacher from neophyte to professional maturity. The following conceptualization put forth by Burke, Christensen, and Fessler (1984) provides a convenient framework for describing these stages.

Preservice

The preservice stage of a teacher's career encompasses that period of training typically associated with initial college or university preparation where teacher certification is the intended outcome. It may also include retraining for a new role or assignment by a practicing teacher. Ryan and Cooper (1980) emphasize that the training of teachers for their formal role actually begins long before they enroll in a teacher preparation program. Prospective teachers have been watching their own teachers for at least 16 years. In doing so they have usually developed strong perceptions of the scope and nature of the teacher's role.

Induction

The induction stage describes the first few years when the neophyte teacher is being socialized into the teaching profession. Many have described this stage as the "survival" period of a teachers' career when their concerns focus on the day to day mastery of their new job (Katz, 1972; Ryan, 1986). Teachers in this stage strive for acceptance by students, their teaching colleagues, and their supervisors.

In looking at cross-cultural similiarities in beginning teachers' experiences, Veeman (1984) describes the first year of teaching as "reality shock." He isolated eight problems perceived most often by the neophyte teacher. These include: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing student's work, relationships with parents, the organization of class work, insufficient teaching materials and supplies, and problems of individual students.

Burke, Christensen and Fessler emphasize that teachers may experience this induction stage at several points during their career as they shift f·om one grade level to another or when changing to a different district or school.

Competency Building

Once teachers have mastered the hurdles of initial socialization into their teaching role, their attention tends to become focused on improving their skills and competencies. During this period, teachers seek and try out new materials, methods, and teaching strategies. Their job is stimulating and they are eager to expand their repertoire of skills. Schnacke, Martray, and Adams (1982) note that this is the stage at which teachers are typically most open to suggestions and will be eager to attend workshops and conferences. However, they may also overestimate their level of teaching skill.

Enthusiastic and Growing

Teachers in the enthusiastic and growing stage perceive themselves as highly competent and good teachers. They experience a high level of overall job satisfaction and constantly seek ways to enrich their job. Burke, Christensen, and Fessler (1984) add that these teachers are often

helpful in identifying appropriate inservice education activities for their schools.

Some teachers are able to maintain a high level of enthusiasm and will stay at this level as they move into career maturity as master teachers. These individuals will bypass the subsequent career frustration and stable and stagnant stages that others will experience. Who are these thrivers? Allain (1985) believes they are teachers who derive strong intrinsic enjoyment from student contact. They are also the ones who are most often identified as mentors by younger, less experienced teachers.

Career Frustration

Disillusionment with the teaching profession and frustration with the day to day demands of the job mark this period of a teacher's career. Job satisfaction tends to sink to a career low and some teachers will succumb to job burnout (Jorde, 1982). Schnacke, Martray, and Adams (1982) call this stage the crossroads of a teacher's career. It is the point where the perceived increasing sense of isolation and decreased support will force many teachers to exit from the profession.

Stable but Stagnant

Teachers in the stable but stagnant career stage have resigned themselves to entrapment. They may feel bitter, cynical, and pessimistic. Some teachers refer to this stage as the "rustout" stage; they put in a full day's work but the joy and commitment to the job that once was there eludes them (Jorde, 1982). Teachers caught in this stage tend to be passive and may appear to be just going through the motions; they also tend to complain frequently and are difficult to motivate.

Career Wind-Down

Career wind-down is the stage where teachers prepare to leave the profession. This can be a pleasant, reflective experience for some, while others may feel bitter and resentful at forced job termination. This stage may span several years or be as short as a few months.

Career Exit

This final stage represents the period of time following job termination by retirement. However, it also includes those temporary leaves of absence that teachers may elect to take for child rearing or exploring an alternative career.

The Interface Between Adult Development and Teacher Career Stages

One of the problems with much of the research on adult development and teacher career stages is that it has been premised on a linear model; that individuals progress though these stages in a sequential predictable fashion. If this model were true, it would suggest that a parallel set of experiences that could be predicted. For example, the neophyte stage of the beginning teacher would parallel the developmental tasks associated with the early twenties; likewise, the career frustration stage might parallel those tasks associated with the mid thirties.

It would be heuristically neat and descriptively tidy if the sequence of teachers' lives were so predictable. But given the wide variation in teacher experiences and the increasingly complex economic and social context in which teachers now work, it would be erroneous to assume that a parallel sequence of adult development and career experiences characterize a prototypical teacher. Indeed, the very notion

of a prototypical teacher is being challenged (Burke, et al., 1984). We cannot assume that teachers will progress through their career cycle in a lock-step, sequential pattern.

If a sequential, predictable, uniform career is no longer the norm, what varied kinds of career patterns do teachers experience? And how are these alternative career paths influenced by the individual's corresponding stage of adult development? Burke, Christensen, and Fessler (1984) suggest teachers may experience many reoccurring cycles or professional career loops within their adult life. For example, it is not atypical for a teacher to teach for several years, drop out of the profession to raise her family and then re-enter at a later point to resume teaching. Others have been employed in some other career for several years and decide to enter a teacher training program for the first time in their late thirties or early forties. Both these paths would have the teacher experiencing many of the survival stage characteristics at a time where family, health, and concomitant responsibilities would be quite different than for the young teacher in her twenties.

To date, no single comprehensive model can be identified in the literature which interfaces adult and professional development. One can draw on these two related areas of research, however, to make recommendations for educational policy and practice that take into consideration the extraordinarly complex interactive nature of these two influences on any individual teacher's personal and professional development.

Implications for Teacher Education

The role of institutions of higher education in meeting the personal needs of teachers has changed considerably over the last two decades. If models of teacher education are to be responsive to the interface between adult development and teacher career stages, they must strive to be flexible both in the content of their teacher training programs and in the structure of the delivery of services.

There are three areas of teachers' development that must be considered when planning programs: their development of pedagogical knowledge; their development of self knowledge; and their development of a professional identity.

The Development of Pedagogical Knowledge

Traditionally, the primary mission of higher education has been to impart pedagogical information -- that vast body of knowledge encompassing the theoretical rationale supporting curricular practices, the content of those practices, and the repetoire of technical skills and strategies that teachers need to effectively implement those practices. Colleges of education have operated on the tacit assumption that when teachers leave the secure confines of the college classroom they have mastered these skills sufficiently to function independently in the classroom. But students in preservice programs usually do not have the experiential background to fully capitalize on the pedagogical instruction they have received.

In particular, the first year teacher struggling with the issues of the "survival" stage needs a support structure to address all the instructional concerns that arise in this induction phase of their

career. Colleges of education can play an instrumental role in providing support by offering workshops specifically designed for beginning teachers. These seminars are most successful when the format is open-ended allowing the teachers to structure the content and focus (Fox & Singletary, 1986). The college can also work with the school district to identify exemplary master teachers. These individuals can assume the role of mentor to the new teacher, supporting and nurturing the neophyte teacher at this critical stage of their development (Driscoll, Peterson, & Kauchak, 1986).

Experienced teachers, as well, need semi-structured experiences at different points in their career to upgrade their skills and knowledge base. A key element of these experiences must be that they are tied to the classroom both in the content of the experience and in the location of the experiences. In other words, when teachers are able to engage in experiences that they see a direct result in impacting their classroom practice, they will find greater relevance in taking part in those experiences. Likewise, when the seminar is offered in the context of the school environment, a greater opportunity exists to link theoretical concepts to practical application. Such experiences are not only less threatening, they are also unquestionably more convenient, thereby encouraging greater participation.

In a recent publication on the role of college's of education in promoting the ongoing development of teacher educators, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (1986) underscores the importance of establishing close linkages with local school districts.

> ...activities are most successful whey they occur on a sustained, long-term basis and where there is opportunity for skill development, practice, coaching and feedback. Colleges of education should enter into agreements with school districts and practicing professionals to jointly plan and provide for continuing professional development activities based on actual needs. Faculty members should be supported and encouraged to provide appropriate services to local school districts on a sustained basis (AACTE, 1986, p. 4).

The Development of Self Knowledge

We have long embraced the notion that teachers need to be experts at understanding human development. After all, they work with young children day in and day out. At the same time, however, they need to have a thorough understanding of themselves. Yet as Howey (1985) underscores, adult development receives minimal attention in programs of staff development. Because of the highly interpersonal nature of teaching and because is a tendency to view teachers instrumentally rather than personally, Howey believes more attention should be given to self-understanding. The degree of understanding teachers have of their own behavior and how they have changed over time, is directly related to the nature and quality of interactions they have with others.

Another facet of this issue that teachers need to reflect on, is how their adjustment to the aging process affects their daily interactions with youngsters. Teachers certainly experience the same physiological and emotional changes that all adults do, yet they often hold unrealistic expectations of their ability to perform based on prior performance at a younger age. In other words, the teaching style that was highly effective in their twenties and thirties may be inappropriate and ineffective when they are in their late forties. Institutions of higher education can play an important role in bringing teachers together at different stages of their careers to reflect on some of these issues.

Whether an individual is a career teacher or one who is just entering the workforce for the first time at the age of 22 or 40, he or she still needs a support structure to help deal with the complexities of juggling personal and professional commitments. Workshops on career change, coping with divorce, parenting, finance, problem solving, stress management, time management, values clarification, and assertiveness training may be appropriate for students at different stages of their adult development.

In addition to serving as a clearinghouse of information on such diverse topics as those mentioned above, colleges of education can also structure learning experiences to provide the personal support that teachers need throughout their careers. For example, colleges might consider taking students through their program in clusters of ten to twenty students each. For both preservice and inservice graduate programs, this model of cohort groups has many advantages. Perhaps most important, scheduling for a cluster group can promote continuity in the sequencing and content of the program. Logistically, as well, schedules can be arranged far in advance so that students can anticipate their study load and plan accordingly. Furthermore, the powerful dynamics that develop within an intact group of individuals who experience a program together can create an atmosphere of mutual trust that encourages the sharing of ideas and collaborative learning. This in itself might promote a higher retention of teachers in these programs.

Certainly an integral aspect of self knowledge is an understanding of the factors involved in achieving job satisfaction. The goal here is to help teachers achieve a deeper understanding of the "goodness of fit" -- that complex interrelationship between worker and workplace. From a

practical standpoint, the "goodness of fit" criteria can serve as a framework for structuring preservice and inservice self-knowledge development.

The "goodness of fit" concept rests on the assumption that there are two kinds of congruence between the person and the work environment. The first kind of fit (French, Rogers, & Cobb, 1974) deals with how the individual's skills and abilities match the demands and requirements of the job. This perspective is particularly important to include in preservice training. Vocational counseling that provides a realistic assessment of person-environment variables may help students achieve a harmonious match.

Some students entering the teaching profession hold occupational stereotypes that are incorrect. Teacher educators can assist these prospective teachers by providing opportunities for in-depth self-assessment to help them understand how their individual preferences, values, learning styles, skills, attitudes, and personality predispositons may be better suited from some work environments than for others. The work of John Holland (1973) may be particularly useful in this regard. Holland's Self-Directed Search, a vocational preference measure, assists individuals in matching personality characterisics and work environments and in anticipating certain outcomes, such as vocational achievement, competence on the job, and social behavior.

The second type of congruence (French, 1982) is the degree to which the work environment meets the worker's needs. From the perspective of inservice education, practitioners can use the "goodness of fit" criteria to structure optimal work environments that promote positive work attitudes. Isolating aspects of the interpersonal and nonpersonal

environment (e.g. physical setting, school policies and procedures) that contribute to feelings of job dissatisfaction and stress is the first step in improving teacher attitudes about their work.

The Development of a Professional Identity

One of the essential domains of teacher maturation is the teacher's development of a professional identity. In this arena, colleges of education can also serve an important function. The literature is replete with references to the essential characteristics of a profession (Lynn, 1965; Etzioni, 1969; Haberman & Stinnett, 1973), but to date, little has been written about how individuals mature in their professional identity. Pickle (1985) has proposed a paradigm as to how teacher professional maturity might evolve. This model focuses on three essential traits: esoteric knowledge, the service ideal, and affective neutrality.

The esoteric knowledge base that teachers enter the profession with is usually limited to an understanding of the most practical and essential skills needed to survive. Later, however, they advance toward understanding theories, philosophies, and scientific research associated with teaching. As teachers mature, they gather more of this intellectual capital. Ultimately, if one stays in the profession and continues to grow intellectually, their professional identity changes from being a mere practitioner and consumer of research to that of being a contributor to the knowledge base. Professional development programs sponsored by the college need to stress both the application of research in the classroom and the development of inquiry skills so that teachers can analyze their own school organizations and instructional practices. The acknowledgement of their contribution to the knowledge base also serves to validate their emerging role as a professional.

The "service ideal" associated with other human services professions is certainly also an important component of the teaching profession. Lortie (1975) found that teachers felt best about themselves and their jobs when they were helping others. In fact, a major factor in choosing teaching as a profession may well be the idealization of the service role. Since teachers come to the profession with a strong service commitment, the challenge is not so much to quanitatively or qualitatively increase that commitment, but rather to help teachers just sustain their commitment. After years of constant giving, it is easy to loose one's dedication to service. The role of institutions of higher education thus must be to provide reinforcement and continued support in this area.

The ability to work with clients objectively and without emotion is described as "affective neutrality" (Pickle, 1985). This is also an important aspect of professional development. Teachers spend many hours with children; their influence can be substantial. But in order to remain in the profession without experiencing job burnout, it is of upmost importance that teachers sustain a high level of neutrality. They need to learn how to emotionally detach themselves from their students in order to have the reservoir of emotional energy needed to help children year after year.

Affective neutrality also implies objectivity -- a respect for all people regardless of their race, religion, sex, intelligence, or socio-economic background. Learning to be nonjudgmental emerges from a variety of experiences in life. It is also a characteristic of teacher professional maturity that simply takes time. Colleges of education, by virtue of their multifaceted role, are in a unique position to help teachers broaden their repertoire of multicultural experiences, thus enriching this aspect of their professional identity.

Conclusion

Those involved in the design of teacher training programs can certainly benefit from the concepts of adult development and teacher career stages. The ideas and the models derived from these conceptualizations offer sound guidance in structuring and implementing successful training programs that meet the personal and professional needs of teachers. This paper has provided an overview of how colleges of education might begin to address some of these needs. Certainly, the way individual insititutions of higher education implement these suggestions will vary from campus to campus, depending on the unique context of its programs and the background and characteristics of its student population.

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